of God?[5] Guard thyself so that thou shouldst not sin, and if thou dost sin, bring an offering before Me. And be ready to hearken.[6] Raba said. Be ready to hearken to the words of the wise who, if they sin, bring an offering and repent. It is better than when the fools give![7] Do not be like the fools who sin and bring an offering and do not repent. For they know not to do evil,[8] — if that is the case, they are righteous? — What it means is: Do not be like the fools who sin and bring an offering and do not know whether they bring it for a good action or a bad action. Says the Holy One, blessed be He: They do not distinguish between good and evil, and they bring an offering before Me. R. Ashi, — or, as some say, R. Hanina b. Papa — said: Guard thy orifices[9] at the time when thou art standing in prayer before Me.

Our Rabbis taught: One who is about to enter a privy should take off his tefillin at a distance of four cubits and then enter. R. Aha son of R. Huna said in the name of R. Shesheth: This was meant to apply only to a regular privy,[10] but if it is made for the occasion, he takes them off and eases himself at once, and when he comes out he goes a distance of four cubits and puts them on, because he has now made it a regular privy. The question was asked, What is the rule about a man going in to a regular privy with his tefillin to make water? Rabina allowed it; R. Adda b. Mattena forbade it. They went and asked Raba and he said to them: It is forbidden, since we are afraid that he may ease himself in them, or, as some report, lest he may break wind in them. Another [Baraitha] taught: One who enters a regular privy takes off his tefillin at a distance of four cubits and puts them in the window on the side of the public way[11] and enters, and when he comes out he goes a distance of four cubits and puts them on. So Beth Shammai. Beth Hillel say: He keeps them in his hand and enters. R. Akiba said: He holds them in his garment and enters. 'In his garment', do you say? Sometimes they may slip out[12] and fall! — Say rather, he holds them in his hand and in his garment, and enters, and he puts them in a hole on the side of the privy, but he should not put them in a hole on the side of the public way, lest they should be taken by passers-by, and he should render himself suspect. For a certain student once left his tefillin in a hole adjoining the public way, and a harlot passed by and took them, and she came to the Beth ha-Midrash and said: See what So-and-so gave me for my hire, and when the student heard it, he went to the top of a roof and threw himself down and killed himself. Thereupon they ordained that a man should hold them in his garment and in his hand and then go in.

The Rabbis taught: Originally they used to leave tefillin in holes on the side of the privy, and mice used to come and take them. They therefore ordained that they should be put in the windows on the side of the public way. Then passers-by came and took them. So they ordained that a man should hold them in his hand and enter. R. Meyasha the son of R. Joshua b. Levi said: The halachah is that he should roll them up like a scroll[13] and keep them in his right hand, opposite his heart. R. Joseph b. Manyumi said in the name of R. Nahman: He must see that not a handbreadth of strap hangs loose from his hand. R. Jacob b. Aha said in the name of R. Zera: This is the rule only if there is still time left in the day to put them on[14] but if there is no time left in the day, he makes a kind of bag for them of the size of a handbreadth and puts them there.[15] Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: In the daytime [when he enters a privy] he rolls them up like a scroll and keeps them in his hand opposite his heart, and for the night he makes a kind of bag for them of the size of a handbreadth, and puts them there. Abaye said: This rule was meant to apply only to a bag which is meant for them, but if the bag is not meant for them, even less than a handbreadth is sufficient. Mar Zutra — or as some say R. Ashi — said: The proof is that small vessels[16] protect [the contents from uncleanness] in a tent of the dead.[17]

Rabbah b. Bar Hanah further said: When we were following R. Johanan [as disciples], when he wanted to enter a privy, if he had a book of Aggada, he used to give it to us to hold, but if he was wearing tefillin he did not give them to us, saying, since the Rabbis have permitted them[18]

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(1) V. infra 24b.